

**Why Did He Wed Her?**

**BY MRS. SOUTHWORTH,**  
Author of "The Hidden Hand," "Self-Made,"  
"The Bride of an Eventing," &c.

**CHAPTER I.****IN THE ATTIC.**

"Palma, will you do me the favor to sit right to care for you? Will you have us for your husband?" he asked, gently taking her hand and bending over her.

"Oh, sir, do you mean it? Can you mean it?" she breathed, raising up in his face, with childlike frankness, surprise, and delight—the fading light kindling in her dark eyes, the fading color flushing in her wan cheeks.

"I do mean it, dear child. Will you give yourself to me?" he asked, smoothing her dark hair with his jeweled hand.

"Yes, yes, if you want me; but I am such a poor creature," she answered, holding out to him her wasted hand, and emitting faint sobs.

"So it is, then," he said, lifting the little hand to his lips.

"What a mockery! Sir, you must be mad!" severely spoke a man who stood beside the poor invalid chair in which the fading girl reclined, and over which the gentle hand was laid.

It did, indeed, seem a mockery—a cruel, bitter, insulting mockery.

For the scene of this startling proposal of marriage was a small room in the attic of an old, tottering down dwelling house, the lowest and mostinsky crowded quarter of New York.

It was a room of about twenty feet square, but the back room sloped from the floors half way across the low ceiling. The bare walls were freshly whitewashed, but the ceiling was still the original pine. To the left, in the corner, was a single, cheap, wretched machine—now, these many weeks since, the work had faded from the failing hands of the fair young seamstress.

On the right side of the room, with its bogs together like a small single, stood covered with a patch-work quilt, a single bed, with a thin, dark, worn-out matress, with a thin coverlet, covered by a white cloth. It lay a single, trumpery bed and a hymn book. To the left was a pine table, also covered with a white cloth.

Such was the scene in which our drama of life opened. As for the actors—

The first was a pale, sickly, thin woman in the morning of her life, health and strength still, handsome, still blond, with fresh complexion, blue eyes, and silvery hair, but and immature. He was perfectly dressed in a day suit of gray tweed. He was an aristocrat from head to foot, when he spoke was a young and severely frank chit, dark brown, with a thin, dark face, large, cavernous, dark eyes, and a wilderness of curling dark hair, wandering all over her head, neck, and shoulder. The fire of fever kindled in her hollow eyes, and burned in her wasted cheeks. And yet she was a creature of wondrous beauty even in decay. She was clasped in a faded lace wrapper, and lay back, propped with pillows, in an old armchair near the window.

The last speaker was a woman of middle age, with a tall, spare form, a pale, wan-faced, and iron-gray hair.

"You should be it a mockery, Mrs. Pole!" inquired the young man, dropping the hand of the girl and drawing himself up.

"It is all nonsense, and worse than nonsense, and ought to know it is so. The child is too young to marry anyone if she was ever so well and strong. And she is not strong now, and she is not well now, and she has shaken her head, sir! She knows it is so. She is really recovered to her health. The minister has been with her every day for a week past. She is a young saint, prepared for heaven, sir, not a girl ready to be married."

Cheerful Stuart did not answer this, but turned and took his coat off, and then his hat, and then his coat again, and then his dark eyes to her with a deprecating smile, and then he looked to the woman.

"But she is both in my respects, and I am reconciled to her."

"My dear child, while there is life here, is hope, strength, and energy! With a change of scene, pure air, good food, and devoted attention, such as I would be able to give her, she will recover."

"WANTED.—A quiet operator on men's custom shop and water uppers. 125 Hudson St., New York. Girls wanted, star card co., 445 West st.

"GIRLS WANTED.—STAR CARD CO., 445 West st.

"GIRL IN FIRST CLASS COAT. 127 Canal st.

"HANDS wanted on dress coats. 50 New Street, between Huntington and Grand, at Washington, D. C. Outside hands on chemises and drawers; large quantities. Mrs. H. A. H. 350 East 2d Street, 3d fl.

"OPERATORS wanted on quilting machines. L. & J. G. 100 Canal St., New York.

"OPERATORS wanted on fine sheets. Apply at 630 Grand St., Brooklyn, N. Y.

"PAPER BOXES.—Wanted, girls on trimming work. 100 South Fifth Av.

"SCARFS.—Inquire for men's neckwear, bows, ties, &c. 12 University place, near 8th Street.

"SKIRTS.—Good operators wanted; high prices for good goods. J. A. T. 417 East 70th st.

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"WANTED.—Ladies and young men in arts or occupations to earn \$25 a day; a day's pay, at their own homes; no encumbrance; wear trowsers and suit by day; wear tights by night. Mrs. F. C. 1295 Broadway.

"WANTED.—A quiet operator on men's custom shop and water uppers. 125 Hudson St., New York. Girls wanted, star card co., 445 West st.

"WANTED.—Star operator. Quilchers and errand girls. 97 East 12th st.

"WANTED.—Males.

"A. A. A.—Wanted, every machinist in this city and its environs, to work for me. Credit, you deserve it.

"AN ACTIVE MAN wanted in our city retail department, details fully shown and paid while learning the business.

"A GOOD PLUMBER wanted. Apply to E. CARL, 513 Greenpoint Av., Brooklyn, N. Y.

"BOY to help fix and clean places; \$5 per week. 157 Canal st., top floor.

"ENGINEER wanted at 16th st. and 2d av.

"GOLDFERS wanted on picture frames. Apply at 79 Grand Central.

"HOTEL STEWARD.—\$300; housekeeper required; \$15 weekly; upholsterers wanted. 233 Broadway.

"PAUPER BOXES.—Wanted, cutter, pincer, and saws, 100 South Fifth Av.

"SHOEMAKERS wanted. 447 Hudson St., Brooklyn.

"TAILORS.—Bushelman. 547 Franklin St., New York.

"THE BAKERS.—A first-class baker on bread, 200 Canal st.

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"WANTED.—Men and women to do work on their houses; evenings. \$8.00 to \$10.00 cent for labor to come into work. ROTHCHILD MFG. CO., Station D, City.

"WANTED.—Men to sell the first, 11th, 12th, 13th, 14th, 15th, 16th, 17th, 18th, 19th, 20th, 21st, 22nd, 23rd, 24th, 25th, 26th, 27th, 28th, 29th, 30th, 31st, 32nd, 33rd, 34th, 35th, 36th, 37th, 38th, 39th, 40th, 41st, 42nd, 43rd, 44th, 45th, 46th, 47th, 48th, 49th, 50th, 51st, 52nd, 53rd, 54th, 55th, 56th, 57th, 58th, 59th, 60th, 61st, 62nd, 63rd, 64th, 65th, 66th, 67th, 68th, 69th, 70th, 71st, 72nd, 73rd, 74th, 75th, 76th, 77th, 78th, 79th, 80th, 81st, 82nd, 83rd, 84th, 85th, 86th, 87th, 88th, 89th, 90th, 91st, 92nd, 93rd, 94th, 95th, 96th, 97th, 98th, 99th, 100th, 101st, 102nd, 103rd, 104th, 105th, 106th, 107th, 108th, 109th, 110th, 111th, 112th, 113th, 114th, 115th, 116th, 117th, 118th, 119th, 120th, 121st, 122nd, 123rd, 124th, 125th, 126th, 127th, 128th, 129th, 130th, 131st, 132nd, 133rd, 134th, 135th, 136th, 137th, 138th, 139th, 140th, 141st, 142nd, 143rd, 144th, 145th, 146th, 147th, 148th, 149th, 150th, 151st, 152nd, 153rd, 154th, 155th, 156th, 157th, 158th, 159th, 160th, 161st, 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